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# A DAY WITH THE WILD PLUMS

(Feb. 22, 1919)

For perfect bliss give me a day like this, clear, bright, and warm, but not too hot, a thicket full of bloom and insects, a net, and a holiday. The sun's rays fall cheerfully on coatless back and hatless head; the scent of the blossoms thrills the nostrils and the busy hum of insects the ears. Such a day and place will quickly drown all care and worry, the blues, a hard cold, and almost an appetite for dinner if one has to forsake the thicket to get it. For this will be our last chance, as the trees are fast dropping their petals. A few more days and the humming host will have dispersed to other hunting grounds hardly to meet again in such a notable gathering until the chinquepin blooms, in late April or May. For the wild plum is a democratic blossom, its nectar and pollen are open to all comers from the lordly Yellow Swallow-tail *(Papilio turnus)* or the even larger butterfly of the Orange Dog *(Papilio cresphontes)* to the minutest fly or thrips. Not so all blooms. Look, for instance, at that Red Bud, *Cercis Canadensis.* An exclusive aristocrat, its sweets are locked up from the common herd in a corolla of rigid petals which only the stronger bees (honey- and bumble-bees) can force apart. The charming Yellow Jasmin is only a little less aristocratic. Its voluptuously scented vase is accessible to only the long sucking tubes of some of the larger butterflies. I note only the Yellow Swallow-tail and the black and white *Papilio ajax.* Poor pickings for an entomologist at either of these plants, so let us back to the Wild Plum.

Most conspicuous among the busy throng are the butterflies. The tree is the Mecca for most of those that have emerged to

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date. The Swallow-tails *(Papilios)* have just commenced to appear. Besides Turnus and the Orange Dog, Ajax is here, the Green-clouded Spice Bush *(P. troilus)* and the blue Pipe Vine *(P. philenor)*. Almost as large as the Swallow-tails but tailless, the Red-Spotted Purple *(Basilarchia astynax)*. Smaller but still of good size is the variegated Thistle Butterfly *(Pyrameis cardui)* and the dark brown Buckeye *(Junonia coenia)* with six peacock eyes, a quarrelsome chap, ever ready to engage in combat with a butterfly twice his size. Of the smaller species, an inch or so across the wings, the pretty little Hair Streaks are common but not conspicuous. They get their name from the delicate hair-like "tail" on the hind wings. They are quiet fellows and stick closely to the blossoms. The largest is *Uranotes melinus*. Its larva is the Cotton Square Borer which also mines loquat buds. *Atlides halesus* is about as large and has perhaps the most beautiful irridescent blue wings of them all.

Darting restlessly from bloom to bloom are several species of skippers: *Thanaos horatius, Lerodea maculata, Thanaos petronius, Catia drury.*

But tastes differ, even in butterflies. Not all of them care for the wild plum. The Long-tailed Skipper, the adult of the Bean Leaf-roller, *Eudamus proteus,* stops for a moment but soon flies on to the few belated blossoms of the catnip over which he lingers long. Like the catnip, this butterfly is a relic of last year's vintage, a straggler which has lived thru the winter rather than a spring addition to our fauna. The Cloudless Sulphur *(Catopsilia ebule)* too is restlessly roaming the woods today but stops at the plum for but a moment. The Monarch *(Anosia plexippus)* and the orange Nicippe pay but little more attention to the blossoms.

There are a few day flying moths about the blooms. The pretty pink and white Bella Moth *(Utethesia bella)* is here in some numbers considering the time of the year; they too are creatures of the fall.

But the catch of the day is a pair of *Psychomorpha epimenis.* It is a rare moth here. I have never seen it before and it has been reported but once from the state. At first glance, as I saw them in the top of the tree, I mistook them for an old friend, the Orange Tip Butterfly, whose acquaintance I first made in a warm south-facing canon in the Sandia Mountains of New Mexico, to visit which I traveled fifteen horizontal miles and half a vertical one. But my reward was ample. In spite of the great difference in the setting, the clean-cut towering Rockies with their exhilarating air in place of the flat landscape draped with Spanish moss and enveloped in a dreamy haze, the insect visitors were much the same, at least as far as orders and families. The calendar said April instead of February, but, as in my garden today, the peach trees were pink with bloom. But they grew in irrigated orchards with a vivid green carpet of alfalfa.

But not all the lepidoptera here are adult visitors. Some are "at home" here, feeding on the leaves. My net gathers several unknown species of "measuring worms", Geometrid larvae; but most conspicuous are the Tent Caterpillars, *Malacosoma americana.* The first warm February days that enticed forth from their winter buds the first tender leaves hatched out these caterpillars. Very quickly they will complete their growth, pupate, and issue as moths to lay their eggs in a bunch around the twigs. Here, protected from rain by a heavy coating of varnish, they will remain all summer and winter. Why only a single brood a season, when there is time for a half dozen? Many other insects, which can find time for but a single generation in the North, produce two or three in the South. Why not Malacosma? Why this neglect of opportunity? Is it that the insect is, geologically speaking, a recent arrival from the North and has failed to change its habits?

Next to the Lepidoptera, the Hymenoptera are most conspicuous. The major part of the busy hum is due to the honey bees. This is their first good "feed" of the spring and they are making the most of it. The wild bee, Agepostenon (?) is here, a beautiful irridescent blue and green fellow, but a lazy profiteer, a parasite on more industrious bees in the matter of raising a family.

The bumble bees are here. Prof. Fattig reports four species: *Bombus fraternus, pennsylvanicus, impatiens,* and *separatus.* But few wasps are about as yet. The common Mud Dauber, *Polistes,* is here as everywhere and a number of Digger Wasps. Of the others I have identified only *Odynerus capra.*

Diptera, the two-winged flies, are the next most abundant group, particularly *Syrphidae.* Prof. Fattig, who paid especial attention to this group, took fourteen species on this date from the blossoms of the wild plum. His list, as far as identified, follows: *Eristalis tenax, E. dimidiatus, E. vinetarum, E. transversus, Helophilus latifrons, Allograpta obliqua, Syrphus americana, Tropidia quadrata, Syritta pipiens, Psilota buccata, Tem-*

*nostoma sp., Melanostoma sp.* There are a number of Blue-bottles and Green-bottles about, especially the little *Orthellia cornicini.* There are a few Tachinid Flies about too, the most common being *Archytas lateralis,* built on the plan of a Blue-bottle, but hairy.

Beetles do not seem to be particularly attracted to the wild plum. The common little Soldier Beetle or Firefly, *Chauliognathus marginatus,* is of course, here. From now to late November hardly a blossom will appear that will not be overrun with these. Here too is the adult of the Southern Corn Root Worm, the "Bud Worm" of the Carolinas and Georgia, *Diabrotica 12-punctata.* We Floridians reserve the name "Bud Worm" for the first generation of the Corn Ear Worm. The "Black Weevil" of corn, *Calandra oryzae,* is here too. I take some pretty little bronze colored Chrysomelids, *Monachus thoracicus,* and large numbers of a minute Chrysomelid and an equally small weevil as well as a *Bruchus.*

Neither are true bugs much in evidence. There is an occasional Stink Bug, Pentatomid, mostly *Euschistus servus* and *E. variolaris,* and a Capsid or two are met with. The Green Peach Aphid, *Myzus persicae,* is common and the minute predator *Triphleps insidiosus,* which is to be found in most blossoms, is here in small numbers feeding on plant lice and thrips.

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## ADDITIONS TO THE THYSANOPTERA OF FLORIDA—V

J. R. WATSON AND EVELYN OSBORN

29. *Haplothrips orlando,* n. sp.

FEMALE. Length 2 mm. Color, including the entire antennae, uniformly dark brown, with considerable reddish-brown hypodermal pigmentation.

*Head* nearly a third longer than wide, surface striated; cheeks slightly arched and converging posteriorly, roughened with minute elevations and set with a few hairs; post-ocular spines rather long and slender but pale. *Eyes* rather small, occupying little more than a third of the profile of the head. Posterior ocelli large, situated opposite the middle of the eyes and in contact with their margins, directed partly outward. Anterior ocellus directed forward. *Mouth-cone* shorter than its width at the base, scarcely reaching the middle of the prosternum, rounded. Antennae about 1.5 times as long as the head, segments unusually uniform in size, shape and color; hairs short and weak.

*Prothorax* but little more than half the length of the head, 2.5 times as wide as long, sides widely diverging posteriorly; posterior angles rounded, each bearing a medium-sized bristle on the posterior border and a shorter one in front of it; two minute bristles on the anterior border near the mid-